

# Energy

Energy touches all our lives. In almost everything we do, whether it's driving to work, heating our homes, or working on a computer, we depend on a reliable supply of energy. Just as energy is important to us individually, it also influences our lives collectively. It impacts our economy, our national security, as well as the quality of the air we breathe and water we drink. In an increasingly industrialized world, the competition among nations for limited supplies of existing energy resources is growing. For our own national interest and for local and to protect the environment in our communities and the world, the United States must lead the way in promoting viable, sustainable, renewable energy resources.

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## Energy Independence

In the summer and fall of 2005, Rep. Eshoo worked with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and business and academic leaders from Silicon Valley to develop the Democratic Innovation Agenda. Among other things, the Agenda pledges that "America will achieve energy independence from Middle East oil in the next 10 years."

The Agenda calls for substantially reducing "the use of petroleum based fuels by rapidly expanding production and distribution of synthetic and bio-based fuels, such as ethanol derived from cellulosic sources, and by deploying new engine technologies for fuel-flexible, hybrid, plug-in hybrid and biodiesel vehicles."

The Agenda also would create a new initiative within the Department of Energy to provide seed money for fundamental research needed to develop high-risk, high-reward technologies and build markets for the next generation of revolutionary energy technologies, such as those emerging from biotechnology, nanotechnology, solar, and fuel-cell research.

Rep. Eshoo is also a cosponsor of H.R.4435, the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy Act, which would create an agency within the Department of Energy to lead this effort.

## Fuel Economy Standards

Seventy percent of the fuel burned today is used in transportation, primarily in passenger vehicles. It's essential that fuel economy becomes a national priority in order to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emission and decrease the nation's independence on oil imports.

Rep. Eshoo has consistently led the effort to raise the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for automakers. She is an original cosponsor of H.R. 3762, which would raise fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks from 25 to 33 miles per gallon (mpg). (Rep. Eshoo's effort to offer this bipartisan bill as an amendment to the Gasoline for America's Security Act was blocked by the House Majority Leadership in 2005.)

## Renewable Energy

California is pioneering a national movement to promote renewable resources for the generation of electricity. Rep. Eshoo was a supporter of the state effort led by former state Senator Byron to increase renewable energy. She has also worked to advance this effort on the federal level, cosponsoring H.R. 983, a bill that will prescribe guidelines for a federal Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The RPS will gradually increase the percentage of energy that must come from renewable sources, eventually requiring that by the year 2027 20% of all electricity generated in the United States come from renewable resources.

## Energy Prices

The costs of heating and cooling our homes and filling our gas tanks have been growing. Although these prices are sometimes exacerbated by natural disasters and supply disruptions, they have not always been justifiable, particularly in comparison to the record profits reported by leading energy companies.

## California's Energy Crisis

Rep. Eshoo has also been a leader in the effort to secure refunds from electricity suppliers who manipulated the markets to make record profits in 2000-2001. During the House's consideration of the Energy Policy Act in 2005, she offered an amendment to secure an additional \$1 billion to \$2 billion in refunds for California. (The amendment failed in the Committee on Energy and Commerce.)

## Price Gouging

To promote accountability and fairness in energy pricing, Rep. Eshoo is an original cosponsor of H.R. 3936, the Federal Response to Energy Emergencies Act. This bill empowers the Federal Trade Commission and the attorney general of each state to address fuel price gouging. Under the bill, each instance of price gouging or market manipulation would be punishable by fines of up to \$3 million and \$1 million respectively.

The bill would also create a national refinery reserve that could produce gasoline for the federal vehicle fleet and the Armed Services and which could ramp up production during a supply emergency elsewhere in the country. An effort to pass this legislation as an amendment to the Gasoline for America's Security Act was defeated by a margin of 199 to 222.

### The Energy Policy Act of 2005

In August 2005, President Bush signed into law the Energy Policy Act (EPAAct), the culmination of the effort he began in 2001 with the controversial National Energy Policy Task Force led by Vice President Cheney. Rep. Eshoo voted against this bill at every stage of its consideration. The EPAAct is at best ineffectual and at worst damaging to the environment.

- The law will not slake our reliance on foreign oil. Our dependence on foreign oil will continue to grow under this bill.
- The law fails to address the contribution that the burning of fossil fuels has on global warming.
- It sets the stage for opening our coasts to oil and gas drilling by requiring an inventory of the off-shore resources.
- It provides more than \$11 billion in subsidies to oil, gas, and nuclear industries.
- The law waives environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act, to promote energy production and distribution.
- The law fails to compensate California consumers for electricity market manipulation in 2000 and 2001.

### The Gasoline for America's Security Act

Within weeks of the enactment of the EPAAct, gasoline prices reached record nominal levels, and following Hurricane Katrina, prices soared even higher. In response, the House Majority Leadership forced through, by a two-vote margin, a bill that would open up most federal lands, including some of our most sensitive areas, including National Wildlife Refuges and National Forests, oil refinery construction.

Rep. Eshoo offered an amendment to protect these sensitive lands and an amendment to raise fuel economy standards for cars and trucks. Both were blocked from consideration. (See "Refineries in Wildlife Refuges" and "Fuel Economy Standards " for more information).